

Longden House
1555 35th Street, N.W.
(Georgetown)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-194

HABS,
DC,
GEO,
130-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

LONGDEN HOUSE

Location: 1555 35th Street, N.W., (Georgetown) Washington, D.C.

Present Owners HABS,
and Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. E. Harrison Clark (1969). DC,
GEO,
130-

Present Use: Private residence (1969).

Significance: This free-standing, frame ante-bellum house has been embellished throughout the years by various owners. In a carefully landscaped setting, it presents a more elegant appearance than its modest beginning.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1853. On May 23, 1853, the Evening Star reported in its "Georgetown Affairs" column: "George Longden erecting a fine dwelling opposite Convent". On June 16, 1853, a deed of trust was recorded from Longden to William Redin, an attorney, advancing construction money to Richard Pettit, a builder, who is described as "about to build" the house.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located on Square 1274, Lot 802 in the city of Washington (formerly Square 104, Lot 179 and part of Lot 181 in Threlkeld's Addition to Georgetown). Formerly, the house has had the following addresses: 100 Fayette Street, until 1895; 1623 35th Street, 1896-1898; 1621 35th Street, 1899-1931. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1849 Sophia Smith to George W. Longden
Deed October 9, 1849. Recorded April 1, 1850. .
Liber JAS 12, folio 14

1853 George W. Longden to William Redin, attorney
Deed of Trust June 16, 1853. Recorded June 16, 1853
Liber JAS 57, folio 446

Redin agreed to advance construction money to Richard Pettit, a builder, who was "about to build" the house. Deed also provided for fire insurance.

- 1863 George W. Longden to Mary A. Longden (Sister of George)
Deed November 5, 1863. Recorded November 5, 1863
Liber NCT 17, folio 306
- 1891 Mary A. Longden died May 3, 1891, leaving Lot 179 and
house to Mrs. Susannah Darne, Widow of Fayette Darne
Will September 19, 1889. Probated June 13, 1893
Will Book 34, page 28
- 1897 Susannah Darne to John D. Sullivan
Deed August 16, 1897. Recorded August 17, 1897
Liber 2249, folio 150
- John D. Sullivan to J. Barton Miller
Deed August 17, 1897. Recorded October 23, 1897
Liber 2273, folio 46
- 1910 J. Barton Miller to William R. Rodgers
Deed December 1, 1910. Recorded December 7, 1910
Liber 3376, folio 289
- William R. Rodgers to Mary K. Miller
Deed December 1, 1910. Recorded December 7, 1910
Liber 3376, folio 314
- 1911 Mary K. Miller to Martin I. Wilbert
Deed January 31, 1911. Recorded February 23, 1911
Liber 3397, folio 314
- 1916 Martin Wilbert died November 25, 1916, leaving house to
his widow, Elizabeth.
Will April 3, 1916. Probated February 19, 1917
Will Book 92, page 176
- 1928 Elizabeth Wilbert to Harriet P. Winslow
Deed July 10, 1928. Recorded July 10, 1928
Liber 6178, folio 316
- 1941 Harriet P. Winslow to G. Howland Chase
Deed February 14, 1941. Recorded February 17, 1941
Liber 7580, folio 242
- 1953 G. Howland Chase to Marylinn Himes Riviere
Deed October 5, 1953. Recorded October 6, 1953
Liber 10063, folio 426
- 1960 Marylinn Himes Riviere to Agnes M. Clark
Deed November 29, 1960. Recorded December 6, 1960
Liber 115, folio 56

4. Builder, contractor: The house was built for George W. Longden, a Georgetown carpenter and later a builder, by Richard Pettit, who also constructed part of the Convent of the Visitation across the street.
5. Alterations and additions: The frame house has brick additions on the east (rear) and north (side). The house has been remodeled frequently since the 1940s, including both interior and exterior changes (see Part II. Architectural Information for details).

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

George Longden lived in his house for about ten years according to listings in the Washington city directories. During the Civil War Longden and his business partner, Fayette Darne, are listed at this address as builders and contractors. Longden's sister, Mary A Longden, purchased the house in 1863. Presumably she rented the house, for she is listed in subsequent directories as living on Frederick (now 14th) Street.

Mary Longden left the house to Mrs. Susannah Darne, widow of Fayette Darne, her brother's business partner. The Darne family had a livery stable on Bridge (now M) Street from before 1854 until 1897. (City Directory).

The 1887 Hopkins plat of Georgetown shows Longden House with measurements equal to the present structure without the garage wing. The plat also shows a structure at the southwest corner of the property which might have been a stable.

J. Barton Miller, who lived in the house from 1898 to 1910, was a justice of the peace and notary public, as well as Secretary of the First Co-operative Building Association of Georgetown. During this time Miller subdivided the south twenty feet of neighboring Lot 181 with Edward Schneider. Later Miller reacquired four feet by a release deed. (It is possible this was done in order to construct the north wing of Longden House.) Title to the property was given to Miller's wife, Mary K. Miller, in December 1910. A month later she assigned it to Martin I. Wilbert.

Wilbert, a chemist, was employed by the Treasury Department and occupied the house for five years until his death in 1916. The house passed to his widow, Elizabeth Wilbert, who resided in it another twelve years and in 1928 sold it to Harriet P. Winslow.

During Miss Winslow's ownership the house was held as a rental property. L. Corrin Strong, later U.S. Ambassador to Norway, rented the property as did Thomas Stone, Secretary of the Canadian Legation, and Nelson Poynter, later publisher of the Congressional Quarterly. In the depression year of 1935 the house was vacant. From 1936 to 1941 it was used as a fraternity house of Georgetown University. (City Directories)

C. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed, Liber SO 24, folio 38, D.C. Surveyor's Office, April 13, 1900.

b. Secondary and published sources:

City Directories

The Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1853, pp. 26, 79.

Ten Eyck's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1855, p.7.

Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1864, p. 279;
1866, p. 409.

Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1890, p. 590;
1897, p. 149; 1898, p. 699; 1899, p. 728.

Boyd's District of Columbia Directory, 1910, p. 954;
1912, p. 1490; 1916, p. 1290; 1928, p. 2248; 1929, p. 2157;
1930, p. 2107; 1931, pp. 2247, 1539; 1932, p. 220; 1934,
pp. 1273, 2204; 1936, p. 2910; 1937, p. 1702; 1940, p. 2148.
1941, p. 2302.

Polk's Washington City Directory, 1948, p. 213; 1954, p. 230;
1960, p. 1462.

Hopkins, Griffith Morgan, compiler, A Complete Set of Surveys and
Plats of Properties in the City of Washington. Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania: G.M. Hopkins, 1887, plate 39.

Prepared by Volunteers for the
Commission of Fine Arts
Washington, D.C.
1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A medium free-standing mid-nineteenth century simple clapboarded residence with brick additions to the sides and the rear.
2. Condition of fabric: Well maintained, furnished, and landscaped. Remodeled continuously from the 1940s, but main house is in its original basic form. Used as a single family residence. (1969)

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 35' three bays across the street front. Original house 20'-6" deep. Rear wing approximately 38' deep and 20' wide. North wing 20' deep and 10' wide. Two stories high plus full exposed basement in front.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Original clapboard house is frame and later additions are brick. Rear or east addition walls have been altered in changing of door and window openings. All walls in good and plumb condition.
4. Porch: The front porch is actually on the second level. This is a small covered porch with roof supported on wooden columns and a double curving stairway connecting it to a center walk below. The stair has simple ornamental trim. This porch was built in the early 1940s to replace a wooden structure that extended the entire length of the house and had brick corner piers with a simple iron railing. Its form was unusual and may have been altered in the early twentieth-century.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys. Two flanking center hall of house, one on the rear wing and one on the north wing. Photographic evidence indicates that the north wing chimney was added after 1941.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main front entry is a six panel wood door flanked by partial sidelights and topped with a fan light and surrounded by molded wooden arch trim with a simple keystone. The rear wall of the rear wing has two pairs of enlarged glass doors opening to the garden and dating from the early 1960s.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Before the 1940 remodeling, the house had one-over-one-light double hung wooden sash. These were replaced throughout most of the house with six-over-six-light sash. All window trim is very simple with plain flat heads. Most windows are equipped with wooden exterior blinds.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Standing seam metal hip roof on the main house and the rear addition.
 - b. Framing: Wood.
 - c. Cornice, eaves: Simple all wood bracketed cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: A basement is under the main house only. A garage under the kitchen was originally a room and was converted and lengthened to fit a standard size automobile. There is a small center entry hall on grade at the front of the basement. To the right is a bedroom with bath and to the left is a den. Part of the center section is partitioned off for storage. There are also several other small storage areas, a laundry room, a furnace room and a stair hall. There is a crawl space under the rear wing. The original kitchen and dining room were probably located in the basement.
 - b. First floor: Main house has a center hall, which formerly had a center stair. Hall is flanked on the right by the library and on the left by the dining room. This section of the house is only one main room deep. The rear wing connects directly to the center hall and consists of one large living room. The kitchen is in a small north side addition.
 - c. Second floor: The second floor has a center hall with one bedroom and bath. The rear wing has the master bedroom and bath. Directly over the kitchen is a study.
 - d. Attic. There is limited attic space over the master bedroom in the rear wing. This is reached by a pull-down folding ladder.
2. Stairways: The present main stairway runs from the first floor to the second floor. The original main stair, as documented by photographs, was along the right side of the center hall; it was removed in the 1950s. Photographic evidence also shows steps in the location of the present stair, which runs sideways across the house behind the dining room. The U-shaped stair is wood with a simple trim and a delicate curved wooden railing. At one time a stair from the pantry went up to the landing. There is scroll work on the exposed ends of the treads down to the basement.
 3. Flooring: Random width pine boards ranging from four to seven inches.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered walls and ceilings.
 5. Doorways and doors: Most interior doors are five panel wood and show in the photographs taken in the early 1940s. There are two vertical panels on the top and the bottom of the doors and a horizontal panel in the center.

6. Decorative features and trim: Most door and window trim is simple wood with bulls eyes in the upper corners. The main first floor rooms have enlarged openings from the main hall. The elegant living room has a carved wooden doorway, from the hall, which came from an old Virginia house in the 1960s. This has a tongue and dart surround and a broken pediment. The double doors going from the living room to the garden have trim to match. The dining room, library, and garden have simple cornice moldings, deep base moldings and chair rails. The chair rail extends up the stairway.

The living room has cornice moldings with dentil work that was installed in the 1960s. The house has five fireplaces intact with mantels. The mantels on the first floor are not original. The dining room has a wooden Adam type mantel, with a pink marble facing. The library has a late nineteenth century small scale wood mantel with a shelf and a vertical rectangular opening. The living room has a carved wooden mantel which is sixteenth century French. The library has built-in shelving with the grooved ornamental miniature pilasters between each book bay. The pilasters are copies of antique pilasters which were in the house from another old building from 1941 through the 1960s.

7. Hardware: Most doors have small brass knobs. The study has ornate lever knobs. There is some original hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Five fireplaces open. Central oil heat with radiators.
 - b. Lighting: All rooms have electric lighting from various periods.
 - c. Plumbing: One bathroom in basement with mid-twentieth century fixtures. A powder room on the first floor. Kitchen and pantry have built-in cabinets and fixtures from the 1960s. Second floor has three bathrooms with mid-twentieth century fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House faces west on 35th Street, N.W., in a residential neighborhood in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. Across the street are some residential scale buildings belonging to the Convent of the Visitation. There is no rear or alley access to the property.
2. Enclosures: The front yard was enclosed in 1941 by an iron fence of the typical Washington hoop and picket variety, but it was later replaced by a brick retaining wall at the front of the property. The rear and side yards are surrounded by masonry and board fences.

3. Walks: A brick city sidewalk crosses the front of the property in the normal Georgetown fashion. A brick center walk goes up several risers to the main entry and a brick driveway connects the garage in the north addition to the street. Walks connect the front and rear yards on both sides of the house. The rear yard has brick paved sitting areas.
4. Landscaping: The landscaping was done by Cary Millholland Parker in two stages -- one in 1941 and the other in the 1960s. This consists of attractive residential planting and paved areas and a small corner swimming pool. The front yard which slopes down from the house to the street has a variety of evergreen plantings.
5. Outbuildings: To the south of the house are a greenhouse and a small tool shed. The greenhouse existed in the 1940s. There is no evidence of other outbuildings on the site.

Prepared by Donald B. Myer
Commission of Fine Arts
July 13, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selections Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture - Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by Donald B. Myer of the Commission of Fine Arts. The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.